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East Europe Report

POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

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21 August 1984

EAST EUROPE REPORT
POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

FINNISH REPORTERS INTERVIEW EAST BLOC YOUTH ON ATTITUDES

Refugees Await New Homeland

Helsinki HELSINGIN SANOMAT in Finnish 2 Jul 84 p 21

[Article by Pentti Suominen]

[Text] Traiskirchen is a small village or town about half an hour's drive from the center of Vienna.

For many, Traiskirchen means new hope, new life and a new homeland.

But for many it means new frustrations, years of camp life and rejection after rejection.

Thousands of refugees from the socialist countries of East Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America arrive annually to this 12-hectare former military barracks area just outside the little town.

A couple of thousand, mainly young people leave here annually for a new homeland. But even a majority of those who have spent years in the camp say that life in Traiskirchen is better than in their old homeland.

Political Reasons

All inhabitants in the camp claim political reasons for leaving their country. And the reason could be quite simple: only political refugees can get political asylum in the receiving country, among which the most important ones are the United States, Canada and Australia.

Assistant Director of the Camp Traiskirchen Bernd Clormann says that it is easier for East Europeans to receive political asylum than for refugees from developing countries. The receiving countries often believe that third world refugees more often flee for economic than political reasons.

Another factor that has an effect on finding refugee and starting a normal life are the age and health of the refugee.

"Young and healthy refugees may find a new homeland in a couple of months," Clormann says.

Anna and Halina are young Poles, Anna comes from Warsaw and Halina from Zakopane. Neither wants to divulge her last name.

They are the tail end of the stream of Polish refugees that filled camps like Traiskirchen all over West Europe after martial law was declared in Poland.

Clormann says that the number of refugees greatly depend on what is happening in the countries in question.

Hungarians Were First

The camp was opened in 1956 because of the popular uprising in Hungary and during that year 200,000 Hungarians were processed through the camp to their new homelands.

Anna and Halina also explain the reasons for their departure were political. They are members of the Solidarity movement which was forbidden during the martial law.

Solidarity once had over 10 million members and the great majority of them is still in Poland. But Anna and Halina do not reveal what particular reasons forced them to flee.

Anna has spent 5 months in the camp. Her husband is still in Poland and she would like him to accompany here to the new homeland which she hopes will be the United States.

Halina has spent 9 months in the camp. She, too, would like to emigrate to the United States.

Both left Poland "legally", as tourists, neither speaks very much English, but both stress that they are studying hard.

Young Have Fewer Problems

Considerably older Maria, also from Zakopane, shares a board game with the girls outside the dormitory.

"The young ones have a better chance to get out. I am already old," Maria, who has spent 3 years in the camp, says perhaps somewhat bitterly.

Nevertheless, she does not want to return to Poland. "I am free here," she says.

Hazmi Gashi is, or was before he left, a Yugoslavian student from Kosovo. Ethnically he is Albanian.

Gashi tells that he worked with people who demanded more autonomy for Kosovo, and participated in demonstrations against the Yugoslav Government.

He says that he attracted police attention and spent 4 months in prison because of his political activities.

Gashi has spent 9 months in Traiskirchen after leaving Yugoslavia illegally, also leaving his mother and sister behind.

Gashi is kept company on an outing around the camp by Heziri Ahmet Albaujen. He is a "real" Albanian from that tiny, isolated mountain republic.

Had Enough of Albania

Albaujen, who has spent 3 months in the camp, says he had had enough of his country's Stalinist life, as he says. Albaujen says he belonged to a group opposing communists and says that his father and brother are in prison in Albania at the moment.

Gashi and Albaujen both speak some German. They are hoping for political asylum either in Austria or in Australia.

The Nagy family from Hungary left their native country after the secret police demanded Janos, the head of the family, to report on his colleagues, Janos Nagy claims.

Janos, who had been working as a hotel pianist, refused and lost his job. The new job was far from home and the salary was low, he says.

His wife Ilona worked as a waitress, but in Hungary she did not have a permanent job because their two children were still young, Nagy tells.

The Nagy family now has political asylum in Austria. The family, after spending a year in the camps, is getting ready to start a "normal life" with the help of housing and a job provided by the Austrian Ministry of Interior as soon as their 11-year old daughter gets permission to emigrate. Their younger daughter already attends school in Austria.

The Nagys arrived in Austria "legally". They came as tourists and decided never to return again.

Their old native country is close, but the Nagys do not believe they will meet their Hungarian relatives very soon. Ilona Nagy tells that her brother attempted to obtain a visa to leave the country but did not get one.

Party Members Have Problems

Romanian Aurian Coteanu and his wife, in their late forties, are having a harder time.

In addition to age, the problem is compounded by the fact that Coteanu, who had an important job in the Ministry of Commerce, at that time also belonged to the Communist Party of his country.

He lost his job when he resigned from the party for religious reasons. But in receiving countries Coteanu is still considered a communist. He shows me a thick pile of applications for asylum. With the exception of Finland, all West European countries, the United States, Canada, Australia, Venezuela, South Africa, and many other countries have received an application from Coteanu, and all have turned him down.

And so the Coteanus are soon facing the beginning of their 4th year in the camp.

Food, Housing and Health Care

Berndt Clormann explains that in Traiskirchen refugees receive housing, food, health services, and in winter some clothing according to need.

According to him, the annual budget of the camp is "millions of Austrian shillings" and the camp employs about 100 Austrian civilian inspectors and about 20 police officers.

There are 1,500 refugees in the camp itself at the moment, but there are over 4,600 refugees within its jurisdiction. Two-thirds of the total number of refugees have been located elsewhere.

The oldest buildings of the camp date back to 1902 when the military training center for the Austro-Hungarian Empire was built in the area.

During the time between the wars the camp at first served as a regular school, later as a Nazi Party school.

After World War II, Soviet occupation forces were quartered there. In 1956, Hungarian refugees arrived to replace the Soviet troops who had left the year before.

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Albanian Youth Faithful to Revolution

Helsinki HELSINGIN SANOMAT in Finnish 16 Jun 84 in Ulkomaat Section p 27

[Article by Kaija Virta who visited Albania in March 1984: "Diana Is a Fiery Revolutionary: In Albania Youth Elite Swears in the Name of the Party"]

[Text] Diana sits timidly on the edge of the chair at the dean's office smiling faintly. She is a model product of the educational policies of socialist Albania. She is the daughter of a miner from a rural area, a female student in a country where women lived in the Middle Ages only a couple of generations ago.

When Diana is invited to answer my questions, there is a transformation: her soft brown eyes become sharp, her chin rises purposefully, the voice is soft but her talk is voluble and passionate.

I had asked her opinion about the differences between the circumstances of the young in her country and in the neighboring countries, Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy.

"According to the papers of those countries, they have millions of unemployed young people. What can those young people do?

They have to deal with moral and physical decadence, drugs, crimes. And it suits the goals of bourgeois societies to ruin the most revolutionary, the most radical element, the young! They are allowed no time to think about overthrowing the system...."

To Teach the Faith

Diana is a third year student in the Department of Philosophy at the Tirana University. When she graduates, she will become a teacher of Marxism-Leninism, perhaps in some rural junior high school. She declares that her task is to guide the young to the right convictions so that the bourgeoisie of the neighboring countries will not succeed in causing the decline of Albania's youth as well.

"They will not succeed because our young have been brought up very well. We are of the opinion that it is best to serve the people and have clean morals."

In many Eastern European countries, it is difficult to find the kind of perfect enthusiasm and faith like Diana Sinan's, or at least similarly uninhibited expressions of it. Such behavior dates back to the forties. In Albania, it is still in full force, even though the revolution is as old as in Poland and in Hungary.

It is true that even in her own country Diana is somewhat of an extreme, not the predominant type. The young people on the streets of Tirana are no Red Guards. Starting in the afternoon, the boys spend hours standing at street corners and, dressed in poloshirts and jackets, resemble the self-assured young men of any Mediterranean country. The girls give the impression of being more reserved, are less fashionably dressed, and always walk in groups.

Street Youth Not Easily Reached

It is difficult for an outsider, who is making an occasional visit to the country and is mainly looking at the propaganda show, to get a real feeling of the lives of these young people on the streets. The literature of country helps somewhat: for example, in several of his novels, Ismail Kadare tells about a gang of loafers in Tirana who prefer girl-watching and bragging to the guys to going to school or work.

But Kadare, too, describes the mid-sixties, the time before Albania's cultural revolution in which one of the goals was to erase these kinds of expressions of decadence. Also, at the end, Kadare's protagonists reformed, shaped up as factory workers or heard the call to patriotic duty in the army.

Due to the high birth rate, Albania is the most youthful nation in Europe. Every year more than 40,000 young people, who have just finished their education, enter the job market. That is the size of a medium size Albanian town.

The state takes care of job placement, that is, it distributes the work force where it is needed according to the economic plan, most are sent to rural areas where the majority of the population lives and which the state wants to keep well populated.

The plan also dictates how many young people are admitted into the university. The more highly educated portion of the population, which is called "people's intelligentsia" here, is deliberately increased more slowly than the peasant or working classes. Nowadays the educated class accounts for approximately 13 percent.

Discipline Is Learned in the Army

Both these future leaders of the nation and tomorrow's factory and farm workers learn to adjust to group discipline from early on, during annual work and army camps. At the same time, some of them get used to leading, commanding, and arbitrating among their peers, which is important from the viewpoint of the system.

Diana fulfills a month's work service annually as directed by the officials. It is already a tradition in Albania that youth brigades build, among other things, all new railroads.

In addition, Diana participates in a month-long military and physical education program and attends military theory lectures for an hour and a half per week.

I ask Diana's friend, Albana, a young lady from the capital, about the student's social life.

"Our principle is: one for all and all for one...", she starts.

The dean, who has otherwise kept quiet, only nodding his head in agreement with the girls' answers, interrupts now: "Do not repeat slogans, give practical examples."

And Albana explains how students get involved in each other's problems, how they help and support each other and explain difficult subjects to those who do not understand.

Full Freedom to Choose Spouse

Of course the students get involved in other things as well besides studying. According to the girls, socials with dancing, poetry recitals, musical performances and skits are popular.

Albana points out that she and her comrades still feel like pioneers in boy-girl relationships. They represent the first generation to be free to fall in love without the threat of forced marriages arranged by matchmakers.

Since even Albana's mother had married during the socialist era, it is possible that she is exaggerating a little. In Albania it is usual to emphasize the achievements of the revolution by reminiscing about how backward things were almost yesterday.

But it is also possible that the power of marriage brokers, especially in formerly Islamic areas, has remained surprisingly persistent. A young worker I met told me that the struggle against the tradition of using matchmakers is one of the tasks of the union in his factory.

And what does Albana imagine the Albania of her children will be like? Her eyes grow round. "Our country is developing so rapidly, it is difficult for me to imagine what the world will be like then," she signs cheerfully.

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Housing Problem for Young Czechs

Helsinki HELSINGIN SANOMAT in Finnish 20 Jun 84 p 29

[Article by Tellervo Yrjama]

[Text] Lenka is a happy, young mother from Prague: she is studying agriculture which is the dream of many other young Czechs.

After she graduates, Lenka is planning to move to southern Bohemia with her husband, an agronomist, and child, away from the "rabbit warrens" of the problem-ridden suburbs of the capital city where she has gotten to know her neighbors only through walls and floors.

Finding jobs will present no problems for the agronomist couple, which is true for all young people finishing their studies in Czechoslovakia. But there is tough competition for the fixed number of student slots and housing.

The toughest competition is for admittance to the department of agriculture, humanities and medicine. Everyone who wants to study engineering is admitted.

Practical Careers Popular

Practical careers, such as nursing, hairdresser's, butcher's, and waiter's, are popular among modern youth, often due to parental pressure. Many skillful workers double their income by working a second job tax free.

Young Czech students are not burdened by student loans thanks to scholarships and summer jobs. Out of their small income, Petra and Vladimir Resetarov, who recently entered the working world, can save money for trips abroad. They have already visited the Soviet Union, Lithuania, DDR, and will go to Yugoslavia this summer to take a look at the Adriatic.

Petra's and Vladimir's family is an example of the melting pot of nationalities in modern Czechoslovakia: he is a Slovak, her grandmother is from Moravia, and they live in the formerly German area, Bohemia, in the spa town of Karlovy Vary.

Petra earns 1,750 crowns as a guide at the Mosen glass factory and her husband earns 2,500 crowns as a construction technician, while the average salary is 2,800 crowns.

Petra and Vladimir had unusual luck in finding housing. His employer showed them a dilapidated apartment which they were able to renovate themselves. The rent is now only 400 crowns but will go up to 700 crowns next year.

Crowded Housing for Many

Many of their friends live with their parents in crowded circumstances. "The best way to get housing is to register oneself in the grandparents' apartment and wait for their death, as cruel as it sounds," Petra says.

Even though 40 percent of all Czechs have moved into new housing after 1970, it is extremely difficult to find housing. A young person can obtain rental housing from the employer if the employer happens to be short of certain skilled workers, such as brickmasons, for example.

Generally parents enroll their children as members of the housing cooperative with the hope that the young people will be able to buy reasonably priced housing or build themselves. But this plan does not always succeed, particularly in the big cities.

Moderate Prosperity

The younger generation of Czechs has grown up amidst reasonable material prosperity. Czechoslovakia competes with DDR for the highest standard of living among the socialist countries in Eastern Europe.

The fathers and mothers of today's youth believed they were creating a new socialist generation who would devote itself to building the society. "The seeds of new man have only been sown," says youth magazine editor Alesh Benda.

Training for shared responsibility and caring starts early. During their pioneer years, for example, Czech boys and girls regularly visit the old people in the neighborhood, keeping them company and carrying heating coals for them.

The ideological education of the Youth League of the Communist Party, emphasizing peace, shared responsibility and equality, envelopes almost all 13- to 30-year old. Monthly political lectures are regarded as force-feeding by the young, which is admitted by the officials of the youth league also.

Hobby clubs and summer camps are popular among the young, even though some come along just to be able to take advantage of the youth facilities or to take trips abroad.

Debating Poetry

Approximately 60 young people have squeezed themselves into the basement facility of the Rubin Youth Club in Old Pague to attend a poetry evening.

The atmosphere is high, there is plenty of laughter, and loud applause as professional actors read the first creations of the aspiring poets sitting in the audience. Towards the end of the 3-hour poetry evening the young start debating the contents of their poems.

"The young write about fear of war, future hopes. The poems express sadness, the search for the purpose of life. They are rational, realistic, but passive," says Radka Fidlerova, an actor taking part in the poetry reading.

He himself is a child of the sixties and seems, like some other middle-aged individuals, to long for political dynamism.

A group of beer drinking art students considers the 1968 Spring of Prague and the Soviet occupation a problem of the middle aged. "For us, it is let bygones be bygones."

Protests Against Nuclear Weapons

According to a large official poll conducted last year, young Czechs support policies of peace more forcefully than their parents. In spite of that, the flood of protest letters surprised the editors of party organ RUDE PRAVO last October when the announcement was made about the arrival of medium-range nuclear missiles to Czechoslovakia.

The poems and the poll results reveal a similar view of the world. That the young take a more rational stand towards the scientific view of the world and a more critical stand towards the existing socialism than their parents is clearly revealed by the results.

Atheist education has borne fruit: the young are less religious than their parents. The gold cross around Petra's neck is misleading; she is an atheist but is wearing the cross to keep a promise to her grandmother.

According to the poll, health, a good job and family are important to the young. Objective information about the economy and politics ranked number eight in importance.

Skoda--A Goal

Yet material goods, a Skoda, a summer cottage and a television, pop up when the young talk about their dreams in the beer and wine bars and coffee shops of Prague and Bratislava.

The surface phenomena of Western commercialism, fashions and pop music, roll over the borders. The young seldom understand the lyrics of the songs as few speak German or English. Many young people also seem to be rather uncommunicative in Russian, their first foreign language.

In Bohemia they watch West German and Austrian television, Austrian commercial radio stations are heard in Slovakia. Western programming offerings are considered a problem by officials of the youth league, but "we schedule interesting competitive programs on our own television as we have beforehand knowledge of Western programs," says the assistant director of the ideological section of the Youth League, Frantisek Cernohorsky.

Nature's Friends' Subculture

Many young people turn their backs to the consumer society and leave to search a simple way of life among nature on long weekend hikes. These "vagabond" youngsters shy away from all organized activity. They have their own subculture with its songs, poems, language. Last year 40,000 friends of nature got together at the Porta song festival.

The energetic youth publication MLADY SVET [YOUNG WORLD] vents pressures of the young and, at the same time, educates them in a gentle manner. The paper is allowed exceptional freedom even though it is published by the Youth League of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. The weekly edition of 460,000 is sold out in no time at all.

Dialogue on Environmental Problems

Ten years ago, MLADY SVET and the Brontosaurus-movement of the Greens that has evolved around it gave impetus to the public dialogue on the serious environmental problems in Czechoslovakia, the acid rain, among other things. After the youth league adopted the environmental movement, the problems are discussed with more caution.

A couple of years ago the paper shocked "certain circles" by introducing rock music as a topic. After 1968, rock music was banned for a long time, now it is being produced in Czechoslovakia itself.

Last December MLADY SVET revealed that Czechoslovakia has a drug problem. The problem, however, is not nearly as severe as in the West, there are hardly any hard drugs, hashish is rare, instead, young drug users sniff glue or combine pills and alcohol.

Excessive use of the world famous beer and good wines has increased alcoholism among men in particular, which accounts for one of the reasons for an increased number of divorces among the young.

"The offspring of Svejk" are no model human beings, sighs MLADY SVET editor Alesh Benda.

New Idol Rocked Onto Throne

A couple of years ago pop singer Miroslav Zhbirka revolutionized the Czech pop world: he dethroned Karel Gott, "Prague's Golden Throat," after Gott's 17-year reign.

Zhbirka was voted number one in the Golden Nightingale contest organized by MLADY SVET in 1982. A younger generation took the lead: Zhbirka is 27, Gott 45. Zhbirka's victory was a first in the sense that as a Slovak he was able to win the hearts of the Czech majority.

Concert Rally Around the Country

Last year, however, Karel Gott, putting on a tremendous effort, won back his title.

Zhbirka's success was helped by his tour of 200 concerts around the country and his rock LP "Atlantida" which became the year's best seller.

Winking, Zhbirka himself belittles the meaning of the popularity contest.

"Of course, I was happy, but I would rather make good music than try to be number one any way possible. I realized that I could kill myself as a musician at that speed," he explains in fluent English.

Zhbirka grew up in Bratislava and is loyal to his native area, but Western pop is familiar to him through his English mother.

The strong spirit in rock in the sixties and the music of the Beatles above all pulled the boy into the world of music.

Like Paul McCartney

Zhbirka looks a little like an 80's Beatle, shy, with smooth hair and sings like Paul McCartney. His music is like a butterfly's flight, beautiful, catching, clever lyrics, the songs tell about love, sometimes jokingly.

"Zhbirka is a good poet, but he does not have a social background. His music is mere pop and the lyrics do not have a message," the editor of the youth publication claims. In his opinion, the rock group Olympia, which has been on the top for 20 years, is more interesting.

Even though Zhbirka does not present criticism in his songs, in his interview he criticizes show business and its superficiality in particular.

"Pop industry pushes strange fashions and behavior models--and the young seem to accept that without question," Zhbirka says with amazement.

He is also puzzled by the fact that the young, in the East as well as in the West, idolize Elton John also because he is a millionaire or Michael Jackson because he is a good businessman.

Diamond Earrings Too Big

Elton John's larger-than-life diamond earrings caused gray hairs to Czech officials when he gave a concert last April in the huge congress hall in Prague.

"The West produces a lot of good pop, but it is difficult for the young to understand what to adopt and what is too difficult for us," Zhbirka says and mentions top hits telling about unemployment as an example.

"I understand very well that young people just want to have fun because we live under tremendous stress in Europe at this time. If we are not able to soon eliminate the threat of war, we will have lost this generation," Zhbirka ponders.

Zhbirka has tried to break into West European markets with modest success. "It is very difficult because Czech rock is considered too exotic in the West."

What about 20 years from now? The Czech audiences are very loyal towards their favorites.

"I do not want to conquer a new generation again. I would feel like a clown," Zhbirka claims. One has to believe him because he claims repeatedly that he is being "honest."

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GDR Leaders Fear New Generation

Helsinki HELSINGIN SANOMAT in Finnish 13 Jun 84 p 30

[Article by Pentti Sadeniemi: "GDR Youths Don't Kick Up a Row but Leaders Seem to Fear New Generation"]

[Text] Berlin, GDR—Wisbyer Strasse in the old section of Berlin known as Prenzlauer Berg, where facades have been crumbling since the 1940's and are still crumbling. It is a quiet evening and young people are on the move by twos and threes in their own directions.

The corner bars start to fill up. Some belong to older people, while in others young people in jeans drink beer, their heads together, distributed in intimate table groups. There are few drunks and nowhere disturbances of the peace in evidence.

Three punk-culture youths put in an appearance on the street. One of them is just budding and satisfies himself with a couple of shy, punk-culture emblems. Two of them are bolder, their hair dyed a poison-green color. All three are strikingly nice-looking, well-behaved. They really represent something new in the GDR and they know it, but not even the dumbest party boss could mistakenly believe them to be dangerous. Or is that the case?

The "Brunnen Keller" disco in the little town of Eisenach in the southwestern part of the country. They are lined up as early as a half an hour before the doors are opened. No wonder, since the town appears to be otherwise pretty much dead. Smoke from the burning of brown coal and the stench of two-cycle engine exhaust gases sting the throats of the foreign visitors, but the local people seem to be used to the yellow-gray air.

Curious glances — it takes only a fraction of a second here too to recognize a Westerner. The young people are clad in the neatest of jeans suits. Punk-culture youths are not to be seen anywhere here; they certainly would not be admitted either. A couple of youths have pacifist buttons on their collars, but there is no hint of political protest.

Western Rock Is Played

Inside, when you get that far, they are of course playing almost pure Western rock. The bartender is apparently a member of the local cell of the youth association, the FDJ (Free German Youth). The maintenance of order is also his job. There are sandwiches on a separate table for the association bigwigs, while others have to stand in line to get drinks for themselves. Everyone is very tame and well-behaved.

The "Youth Talents House" in downtown Berlin. Here too a disco is sometimes gyrating, in addition to which there are jazz evenings and a countless number of hobby circles for those fortunate ones who are qualified to join in. The people waiting on line outside are more cosmopolitan than in Eisenach, but in terms of behavior they too are subject to proper discipline.

Inside, in the club premises, there is another peculiarity: a bust of Lenin which is absolutely firehouse red. It may be carefully considered spontaneity, but it is certainly not a political insult.

Idols of socialist youth far from Hamburg or West Berlin's restless, dangerous nights? That's what one might believe. Yet our strongest impression of the GDR this summer is that it fears its own young people, and fears them a lot. Why does it depend on second-hand information and guesswork?

Involuntary indications of their own feeling of weakness are everywhere evident. Their fear of the young people leads to a fear of those foreigners who have taken it into their heads to come to the country to inquire about youth issues. Officials are reacting to them like Little Red Riding Hood once did to the Big Bad Wolf who snapped at her.

The above-noted impressions were almost stolen. If things depended on GDR leaders, foreigners would be shown only teachers and officials, not young people. From expectation to realization, the program underwent significant changes and all attempts to amend it came to nought.

Familiarization Difficult

A request to familiarize ourselves with young people's work disappeared without a trace and a week was not enough to comply with a verbal request. The university student body was probably also too dangerous for the foreign visitor. Instead, we were offered the elementary school, whose oldest pupils present were 8-year-olds.

A request to take a look at a Berlin disco accompanied by a (East German) photographer was turned down by the youth association, the FCJ [expansion unknown], in whose opinion places where one can dance apparently fall into the class of government secrets.

To top it all, they went to the trouble of right from the start making it clear to the foreign visitor that it was appropriate to stick to the scheduled program. So we were warned that conversations that might arise outside of it "could not be used for journalistic purposes."

This sort of behavior is, of course, first of all impossibly stupid, secondly quite unnecessary, thirdly counter to the text of the Helsinki ruling and fourthly against their own interests because the credibility of the official information offered at the same time drops right through the floor. So what has gotten into GDR officials, a sliding back into the idiocy of Stalinism or suddenly produced panic? Or both?

Two new factors seem to be behind this spring's fear. One is the influence of the Evangelical churches, which, together with Luther's anniversary and the coming into vogue of the peace movement, appears to have grown a great deal among young people, to the extent that the power of the state has begun to feel itself threatened.

The other is the broader policy of change pursued since the beginning of the year, which appears to be a bad mistake from the standpoint of those in power. It was supposed to relieve social tension, but tension has increased.

Edginess seems to be most in evidence in precisely those areas in which they would not like to show it. Everywhere they expect the foreign visitor to want to inquire about the reasons for the recent wave of change and, if he does not, they assume that he approaches the subject secretly in other ways. The GDR's paid ideologists seem to be on the defensive and therefore behave aggressively.

Official Optimism in the Youth Association

Naturally, they admit nothing. At the Berlin headquarters of the official youth association, the FDJ, they speak as they have probably spoken since as early as the 1940's. Afterwards, it amounts to almost the same thing whether one leafs through one's notes or the handbook published by the FDJ: In both of them resounds that insipid, official optimism that is maintained, no matter whether reality is behind it or anything else.

One of our three conversation partners at the FDJ was already middle-aged or close to it and the two others were under 30 years of age, obviously apparatchiks who had risen rapidly in their careers. They in fact rather reminded us of our student politicians: an overdose of energy, firm-seeming elbows, in their behavior an automatic antipathy toward anything foreign, in their souls a gaping intellectual void cloaked with pseudointellectual phrases.

A foreigner leaves the conversation thinking that a considerable portion of the problem of the GDR youth policy is probably manifest in just this kind of behavior. One would think that anyone at all would want to flee from the guardianship of such power assistants — into his private life, punk gangs, the church and, in the end, even away from his homeland, to the West... actually, anywhere at all where one can find something genuine or spontaneous.

FDJ members nevertheless deny that they are in any sort of competitive situation with the church. They teach that there is a home for the pious too in the youth organization, if only their basic attitude toward socialism is favorable. They admit that today's young GDR citizen has become more demanding than his predecessors: Not just any old explanation is any longer acceptable to him.

Questions for the Party

This observation was repeated in three or four other conversations with educators of young people. The need for improving the quality of official propaganda seems to be widely recognized. How such improvement can be achieved when guidance remains the same was not more specifically explained.

The party has for about 40 years now reminded youths what all the state provides them with: a free education, social security, training, although not always for a job in keeping with their dreams, cheap rentals and the basic necessities, etc.

It is all true, but also taken for granted by a generation that has grown up with these things. Now that generation is asking why they still have to wait so long for a place to live, to say nothing of a car, why dressing oneself in style demands such an exorbitant amount of bother and money, why a portable cassette recorder costs an average month's salary and a color television 4 months' wages, and above all why traveling abroad is the privilege of a rare few, one that is meted out sparingly and with suspicion.

Why is the answer to all questions only in terms of one doctrine and why does it have to be a tedious one, why is a spontaneous peace action a virtue in the West but a reason for throwing you in jail in the GDR, why is information on environmental hazards provided only sparingly if at all and why was it for 2 days a crime to claim that the Korean airliner was shot down when finally on the third day it turned out that it had after all been shot down?

These are mostly questions to which the standard answer of those who hold the monopoly of power is: "Keep your mouth shut!" No wonder that young people run to listen to the words of the pastor of the nearest church, even though they do not give a damn about religion. The pastor at least lets them ask questions.

Church Provided Discussion

On church doors everywhere there are announcements inviting people to discussion sessions. A cathedral in the very heart of Berlin twice a week offers help to those people who "want to talk with someone even just once," "feel lonely and left alone" or "have lost their faith in God and people."

On the doors of the FDJ offices they do not offer to talk things over with "those who have lost their faith in Lenin." There would probably be too many of them.

The officials still hold all the cards and that is just why their fear seems to be so significant. The state, which is simultaneously the only educator and (almost) the only employer, can always force people into external obedience. Aside from academic achievements, university positions still also depend on "a positive attitude toward socialism," to say nothing of vacation advantages and such like.

What they probably most fear is that a foreigner might find his way into those unofficial small youth groups through the formation of which information is now and then circulated. In some of them they discuss environmental issues, in some peace, in some they discuss women's liberation and in some others the philosophy of life, either on the periphery of some church or just anyhow, but always detached from the watchful eye of the party and the FDJ.

In some of them perhaps they even talk about the death of the ideology, about German solidarity and the national heritage in a divided country. A system that concerns itself with fearing such activities also has reason for its fear: the paradox of GDR citizens in the summer of 1984.

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Western Values in Hungary

Helsinki HELSINGIN SANOMAT in Finnish 18 Jun 84 p 23

[Article by Pentti Suominen who visited Hungary in May 1984]

[Text] On a warm early summer evening the air in Budapest is filled with heavy metal sound.

The music comes from the right, Buda, side of the Danube, but the drum beats and the electric wail of the guitar make the air vibrate also on the Pest side.

On the terrace below the former royal castle they have erected a high stage flanked on both sides by mammoth amplifiers.

Colored lights reflect on the area in front of the stage, the restaurant next door, and on a few hundred onlookers and listeners.

Around the stage a group of young people are dancing to the beat of heavy rock, those standing a little farther away are tapping their hands or feet to the music, but the majority of the audience seems to be deep in their own thoughts, the air filled with the electric music, with no room for any other sounds.

Escaping the Daily Grind

These outdoor concerts in the youth park below the royal castle offered on summer weekends allow part of Hungary's youth a chance to escape the daily grind, school worries, job problems and housing problems.

A young Hungarian party worker says that the Western music does not mean a rejection of socialist values as such, and that the Hungarians will have to be able to adjust to the cultural pressures coming from the West even better in the future as the wealth of information crossing national borders increases continually. But many Westerners who have lived here say that nothing can bring Western values to Hungary as effectively as international youth culture.

Sandor is one of the young people who have come to attend the rock concert by the Danube.

Sandor, who will begin his compulsory military service in August, belongs to the generation that has seen Hungarian prosperity increase and circumstances improve considerably faster than in most neighboring socialist countries.

He has not seen war, has not experienced the post-war shortages, nor the bloody crack down on the 1956 uprising.

But Sandor is not happy. According to him, Hungary's prosperity is based solely on the Soviet Union's need to show that socialism can create tolerable circumstances in one country at least.

He is aware of the problems caused by the war and he proudly tells that his father fought Soviet troops in the fall of 1956.

Sandor's thoughts about Hungary's problems lack nuances like the music that had blared along the Danube a moment ago.

"Me a communist? I hate them!" Sandor says in a small beer bar after the concert, and two of his friends, who are only now breaking out of the music's spell, nod in agreement.

Sandor does not believe nor hope that there will be another popular uprising in Hungary in the near future, but should there be one, "I will fight like my father did in 1956."

Many Views

Sandor is one example of today's Hungarian youth, maybe an extreme, says someone who has worked a lot with young people. He says his name is Tomas.

Tomas says that the Hungarian youth is going to many different directions these days, many more than a foreign tourist on a short visit could immediately see.

One example could be Istvan, somewhat older than Sandor, who was born in a rural area and has evidently had to work quite hard to achieve his fairly comfortable status in the capital.

"Hungary is the only socialist country where the current leadership would most probably be reelected in free elections as well," Istvan says.

One can hear the same opinion also in discussions with Hungarian officials.

Tomas says that in addition to young people like Sandor and Istvan one can find much else in Hungary--for example, the mainly rural "green movement" with its "soft" life values and its goal to get back to nature and folk traditions.

But Tomas says that even young people like Istvan, who are fairly happy with the prevailing circumstances, are not grateful to the socialist system. They rather credit their leaders for what they have been able to accomplish in spite of the system.

Hungarian officials of youth affairs are aware of the situation admitting that there is more open criticism directed at the socialist system than in many other socialist countries. But they do not view the situation as causing concern.

"Our atmosphere is such that even young people dare express their opinions," says Lazslo Lehoczky, a representative of the Communist Youth League.

Lehoczky himself is not old and it is his job in the Youth League to help improve the circumstances of the young, especially those in troubled circumstances.

"We cannot trust that everyone is happy," the communist youth leader states and refers to actions taken by the government that have resulted from Hungary's economic problems and that have lowered the standard of living for most citizens.

Hungary's rate of inflation has been close to 8 percent in recent years, and wages have not kept up.

Worsened economic circumstances have particularly affected the standard of living of students, civil servants who have academic backgrounds, and retirees, who all live on fixed incomes. The actual working class has been able to compensate lost income by moonlighting thanks to Hungary's new economic arrangements.

"The West has a higher standard of living, which is why people here imitate the Western countries. If the standard of living were lower there, there would be fewer imitators," Lehoczky says.

Only about 30 percent of the Hungarian youth belong to his league, which is a very low number considering the general situation in socialist countries.

The number of members has seen a slight rise during the past few years, but the party's influence has waned among high school students, for example, according to the youth leader.

Another youth official, section chief Ivan Bersenyi of the state's youth committee, says that the biggest problem facing young Hungarians today is the difficult housing shortage.

That very problem is mentioned by almost every Hungarian, young and old as well.

Istvan now lives in a small but otherwise comfortable apartment with his wife and 6-month old daughter on the Buda hills. But, they had to postpone having their first child for close to 15 years. The responsible parents did not want to have a child earlier because of the housing situation.

Another couple--considerably younger than Istvan and his wife--Jozcef and Anna have lived in their own apartment from the start of their marriage, but only because of financial help from Anna's wealthy parents.

Bersenyi tells that Hungary instituted a specific youth policy in the early 1970's, spurred particularly by the difficult housing situation as experienced by young people as well as problems related to starting careers and having children.

"The basic interests of the old and the young continue to be the same, but we had to get rid of certain illusions," the more mature youth official states.

According to him, previous policies simply transferred the inequalities from generation to generation: children of poor parents had to shoulder the problems of their parents while children of the well-to-do could live well thanks to the wealth of their parents.

Last year a new program was initiated of providing young couples with "fairly substandard county housing as "temporary housing" until they are able to get permanent housing.

But Bersenyi says that many young people do not trust the arrangement. "They are afraid that temporary will become permanent," he says.

Hungary's youth policy, in addition to housing policies, tries to even out the wages of young and older workers, as well as to guide young people to careers where they would avoid becoming frustrated with their jobs.

Peter Wootsch, the cultural secretary of the largest university in Hungary, the Technical University of Budapest, says that one difficult problem is the difference in wages of the young people who have academic training and those who have vocational school background.

The schooling of an engineer takes 6 years, but after he graduates, his salary is only 80 percent of the starting salary of a non-academic young person who entered working life much earlier.

Officially there is no unemployment in Hungary, but, according to Wootsch, only one-third of those who graduate get a job that they want.

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United Workers' Party Participation

Helsinki HELSINGIN SANOMAT in Finnish 25 June 84 p 24

[Article by Kaija Virta: "No Interest in Youth Organizations"]

[Text] Those who have been young in Poland in the early 1980's, sociologists say, are a close-knit, different generation, more clearly defined than any other post-war generation, sharing good as well as bad experiences.

The spearhead of the Solidarity movement consisted of the young. Those who are around 20 years old today were not generally active participants in what was happening in August 1980, but many experienced it as their "own" in spirit. The later disappointments and the silencing of the movement became theirs as well.

Now young people stay away from movements--the movements permitted by the government. In the United Workers' party, youth participation is the smallest ever since 1945. An official poll reveals that young people have no interest or hopes in the permitted youth organizations. For many, church organizations are the favorite forum for getting together and exchanging ideas.

Music, Movies

If you are young in Warsaw, you will spend your free time with friends, music and movies. You will queue up to see a domestic rock movie, or "Tootsie", or another new domestic release "The Ghost", which deals with the problem of impotence and used as production advisor an expert with a doctorate in sexology. "The Ghost" packs the theatres even though it turns out to be a stomach turning melodrama with a heroine appropriately named Angelika.

If your tastes are a little more refined, for the price of a coke bottle you can buy a newly published little novel, "Eyewitness, Diary of A Crisis." The back cover reveals that the novel deals with a young man's experiences in 1980-1981. Since the book is printed by an official publisher, there are no political surprises in it. Solidarity is mentioned fewer times than Mahler, and Walesa fewer times than Milosz, however, both are mentioned in a neutral, not condemning tone.

Those who organize debate evenings in Warsaw complain that it is very difficult to get even students excited about topics that are mentally demanding. Talks on subjects such as fantasy in art, research on the supernatural, or the world's great religions draw the largest audiences.

The difference between this and previous generations also shows in the fact that a high level of education is no longer as sought after as before. During the years of economic crisis, the possibility of getting a decent salary has become more valuable than an academic degree.

Western Fads Take Root Quickly

The black cavelike room of student club "Renovation" is quiet in the middle of the week. But it is packed on Fridays when the few hundred punks of Warsaw gather there for their own weekly event.

It was at "Renovation" that the first punk rock concert in Poland took place, almost 10 years ago. Waves of new fads from the West quickly reach the shores of the river Wisla.

One can find punk groups in many of the larger cities in Poland. In smaller towns the groupings typical for the age most often takes place in local sports groups, and their 15-year old members are just as apt to engage in fistfights as the punk gangs in Warsaw.

RADAR, the cultural magazine for the young, reports that the most popular youth cafes in Warsaw each have their own clientele: one is frequented by the punks, another by the more conventional--in the opinion of the punks, the "more commercial"--pop figures, and the third by the rich who boast by drinking expensive imports and by their status apparel.

RADAR editor-in-chief Jerzy Klechta says that in rural Poland young people's lives often seem as if from another planet compared with those of their city counterparts. The rural young grasp the reality more actively much earlier and do not quite understand the rebellion and intellectual arrogance of the Warsaw young.

Hard Choices

The respected weekly POLITYKA wrote recently that today's Polish youth faces very difficult choices. They should be able to merge two different, not easily joined, goals: to get ahead well in life and still hold on to one's ideals.

"It seems that the press is writing quite openly about the problems of the young," I remark to the three students, Violetta, Bogdan and Marek, sitting at the counter of the "Renovation."

They glance at each other with a quiet smile. Marek says that certain marginal phenomena are written about because they are so visible that it is impossible to ignore them. In her opinion, the big, central problems are not sufficiently touched upon.

Economic problems are common in the student dormitory above the cellar club "Renovation", even though Violetta thinks that the young have fewer of them than the older generation, and Marek sends a message to foreigners: do not regard Poland as an Uganda where old toys and shabby clothes are welcome.

Education is free but student life is not. One needs at least 7,000-8,000 zlotys to live on, which is approximately half of an average worker's wages. If the income of the student's parents divided by the number of family members is less than that, he or she will receive the difference as scholarship.

But there are immediate problems if the parents need the money for something else, if the student cannot get housing in a dormitory, or if he wants to buy something a little more expensive. You can tell from the way people dress who has wealthy parents, my companions admit.

Part-Time Jobs Help Pay Costs

Romek, just finishing his engineering degree, has broken off relations with his parents. The break came as a result of disagreement regarding the son's contribution to the father's business venture, but Romek feels that the atmosphere of the times also contributed to the problem. Everyone is nervous, young and old alike.

Romek and many other students need to work. There are about 10 student co-ops that arrange jobs for their members, from manual labor to private lessons. Romek estimates that one of five among his friends are on the lists of these co-ops and, of course, students find employment independently as well.

In principle, a young person who has finished training for a career is guaranteed a job. The main worries are whether the first job corresponds to the training, is otherwise appealing, or is located in the desired area and offers at least a decent wage.

Salaries are important because of the single most difficult problem facing the young, that of finding housing.

Obtaining a cheap co-op apartment through normal channels takes 10 to 12 years nowadays. But one has to live somewhere while waiting for the co-op. If one does not want to live with one's parents, often the only alternative is to buy a temporary, hard currency apartment for temporary housing.

Romek speculates that the only way he could move out of the dormitory into his own apartment would be if he consented to take a job in a rural area. In rural areas, starting salaries are somewhat better than in the cities because there are fewer applicants for jobs there.

Many establish a family before having any certainty about housing. Having children, even several, is one of the most popular forms of escape in an era of social frustrations.

Lady Pank Helps Escape from Reality

"The result of all the events of recent years is the fact that Poland's youth do not have actual intellectual idols," ventures the editor in chief of a youth publication. "It is mostly those who are able to offer to the young escape, entertainment and relaxation who attain the idol status."

This kind of an idol is perhaps the rock band "Lady Pank" which was voted as Poland's best last year. In "Sand Castles" the band itself sings about illusions, escape from reality:

"You walk on the street and smile, you have planned a bomb, concentrated death, you know the day and the hour when the world begins to fear.... The police in all nations want to know your face.... Sand castles, mere glass! Hello again, morning shift--that is your life...."

Or in the song "Ever Stranger": "I play all the time, I sing, I eat, I sleep, but I really do not exist. I am a stranger all the time, total stranger here, like an enemy..."

The band took its name from its first top hit "Little Lady Punk." The group was formed in the early 1982 and its purpose was to make fun of the Polish imitations of the punk wave.

A wave of crudely worded but seemingly honest rock music rolled over the monotonously romantic disco tunes in Poland some time in late 1980 or early 1981. Since then, rock as dominated popular music, almost dictatorially, in many people's opinion; no sharp criticism of it has been allowed and even those who feel another type of music would suit their style better have had to perform rock.

Rock was nationalized immediately in Poland, that is, it was sung in Polish and Polish emotions were expressed through it. It has received ample time both on radio and television.

The nihilistic punk spirit is reflected in the names of Polish rock groups as well. There are "Autopsy", "WC", "Clinical Death", and "Closed Unit". The same is true of the lyrics. One critic states that in recent years Polish youth music has clearly developed to two different directions: a sort of official status is held by the masturbating style lashing at the self and reality, while the lyrical, "flower kissing" style was driven underground.

This spring some began to suspect the beginning of the end of the great rock boom was near in Poland. There are complaints that the iron laws of the entertainment markets, independent of the economic system, have flattened rock music into lifeless commercialism.

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Status of Romanian Youth

Helsinki HELSINGIN SANOMAT in Finnish 30 Jun 84 p 23

[Article by Pentti Suominen who visited Romania in May 84]

[Text] The Romanian youth disco in the center of Bucharest, close to the Ministry of Finance and some University of Bucharest buildings, is a low-ceilinged, cavelike facility filled with thick cigarette smoke.

At one end of the main hall there is a dance floor lit by blinking disco lights. There are few people sitting at the tables but the dance floor is crowded. The music is local disco tunes which does not distinguish itself from the mediocre music typically played in places like this.

Even though the obvious purpose of this event is to have fun, the expressions on the young faces are very serious.

Perhaps the young minds are depressed by the gaping hole inflicted on the often very thin wallets by the expense of the disco night.

Director Tudor Mohora of the Communist Student League of Romania says that young people studying at universities and institutes of higher learning receive a monthly scholarship of 750 lei from the state.

Out of the amount, 600 lei pay for meals in a student cafeteria and 50 lei are spent for dormitory rent. The remaining 100 lei the student can use for entertainment.

In the disco lobby the students are charged a 20 lei admission and a 30 lei drink is more or less forced on the entrant.

And thus, one evening at a disco will use up half of the month's entertainment budget.

Sixty percent of the students receive a scholarship. The rest live with their parents and have to do with what the parents can spend for them, Mohora states.

And quite obviously also those who have scholarships end up having to resort to parental assistance if the parents have any extra money during the current difficult times as Romania is implementing its ambitious plan to pay off its debt to the West by 1990.

Every Romanian child and youth has to plant at least one tree and one flower, says Ion Ionascu, an employee of the cultural section of the Romanian Pioneer League.

He tells how 7-year old pioneers are already helping in construction work by carrying bricks, paint and water. On their way to school children and young people pick up paper and empty bottles which are then collected by trucks arriving to schools to make pick ups.

"Thus they achieve results that the future generations can also enjoy," Ionascu says.

At the moment, working, if not almost sacrificing, for the future generations is emphasized in Romania perhaps more forcefully than in any other socialist country.

While Hungary, as heavily indebted to the West as Romania, pays special attention to the standard of living for the young of today, Romania still officially declares itself a developing country which has to tighten its belt, 40 years after the arrival of socialism, to assure the well-being of the next generation.

But young Romanians do not complain about the task given to them. Or, at least they do not want to discuss their problems with a foreigner in discos or in outdoor cafes all over green Bucharest.

Conversations Reported

A foreigner who has lived in Romania for several years says that, according to the law, every Romanian who has had contact with a foreigner has to report on their conversations within 48 hours.

This source says that this law is not always strictly enforced, but adds that the mere existence of the law makes people cautious.

Foreign students, the majority of whom come from developed countries, are a little more talkative.

One Arab student says that in Bucharest alone there are currently 17,000 students from various Arab countries.

Rashid is a Syrian studying his first year in Bucharest. He is not satisfied with his life here and complains about primitive dormitories and poor food.

Currency Shop Out of Reach

But he receives hard currency from home which makes life much more tolerable. In the hard currency shop of Hotel Intercontinental one can find items which are out of reach for an ordinary Romanian youth.

Rashid thinks that as far as foreign students are concerned, the biggest problem arises if they marry a Romanian girl. The foreigner has to continue to live in a dormitory assigned for foreigners and the wife will continue to live with her Romanian fellow students.

A foreigner who has lived in Bucharest for years says Romanian youth are particularly upset at the moment by the statute enacted in March which attempts to prevent abortions which were declared illegal in 1965.

According to the statute, officials can send doctors to schools and work places where they will have the right to examine any young women.

If the girl is pregnant, her name is entered in the books and she will have no possibility of interrupting the pregnancy, the source explains.

Behind this problem is the attempt by the country's leadership to increase the birthrate, which in itself is part of building tomorrow's Romania.

Ionascu says that an average Romanian family currently has two to three children, but that it is not enough.

"The state and the party are doing their best to increase the country's birthrate...the goal of the policy is as many children as possible," he says.

No Pill

Neighboring Hungary is familiar with the official Romanian policy because many Hungarians have relatives in the old Hungarian areas in Transylvania.

"They do not have the pill," is often offered as the first comment on Romanian problems. And the Hungarians say that different birth control paraphernalia are the most important items smuggled into Romania as gifts by those who visit there.

Party Career Starts at Age of Four

Young people have been organized more effectively by the Communist Party in Romania than in most other neighboring countries, and so one's "party career" may start as early as at the age of four when children join "Hawks of the Fatherland" established in 1977.

When school starts, children switch into pioneers, and at the age of 14 they join the communist youth league. According to Mohora, 90 percent of young people belong to the league. Corresponding numbers in Yugoslavia and Hungary are 70 and 30 percent.

As is common in socialist countries, the training of youngsters in the youth league in Romania too includes ideological and patriotic education as well as training in weapons use.

But even though the life of a Romanian youth seems more distressing than life in certain neighboring countries, it might, nevertheless, have a couple of advantages.

In Romania, officially at least, there is no unemployment as in Yugoslavia.

"I cannot see any time in the near future that we would be faced with that problem," says a representative of the government.

No Housing Shortage

And Romanians claim that there is no housing shortage in their country as in most of the neighboring countries.

"I have not at least heard anyone complain about this problem," says another foreigner who has lived in Bucharest for a while.

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Struggle for Souls of Yugoslav Youth

Helsinki HELSINGIN SANOMAT in Finnish 27 Jun 84 p 27

[Article by Pentti Suominen]

[Text] Yugoslavia is a frontline country in the struggle that is being waged by the world's leading political ideologies for the souls of young people.

The socialist system rules in this multinational, nonaligned country, but Yugoslavia does not possess the means to prevent Western ideas from spreading among its people like the other countries that belong to the same ideological camp.

We are sitting on the top floor of the 20-story high sky-scraper that belongs to the only party permitted in Yugoslavia, the Communist League. A beautiful view opens up over old and new Belgrade.

Dragon Ilic, a young man himself, member of the leadership of the communist Youth League, is explaining problems caused by the special status of Yugoslavia.

No Born Socialists

"We cannot start with the assumption that a child born in a socialist country is automatically a socialist," he says.

According to him, the party and the party's youth league in particular have to wage a continuous battle for the souls of young people, who have many personal experiences of capitalist countries and their advantages and disadvantages.

At the moment, 700,000 Yugoslavs are working in Western Europe's capitalist countries. In spite of the current economic problems, every Yugoslav citizen is free in principle to travel to the West at any time, and there is hardly a family that has not had at least one family member visit a Western country at some time.

Connections to the West also show in the street scene, fashions, the impressive number of cars--suffering from gas shortages--and in fairly well appointed shops in spite of troubled economy.

Ilic says that the close to 1 million unemployed is the biggest problem facing the country at the moment--almost 70 percent of the jobless are women.

"In this respect the young are critical, but in general the mood is good," he adds.

He says that dissatisfaction would be more widely spread if the young did not have a chance to play a role. But the communist Youth League offers its members--70 percent of the young Yugoslavs--this opportunity, he claims.

But a female journalist writing about youth issues in a leading Belgrade paper sees matters differently.

"The young want to be able to solve their problems themselves--not have the party or someone else do it for them," she says.

Lost Faith in Socialism

Branko, who represents the Yugoslav intelligentsia, goes even farther. According to him, Yugoslavia's youth have lost their faith in socialism as a working alternative for solving problems.

He also criticizes the unusual workers' autonomy model of Yugoslavian industry saying that it produces much talk and little work.

But Branko, who has traveled widely, also sees the negative side of capitalism: why earn more than one needs for everyday living? Why kill oneself working in order to be able to invest in something that produces more than one person or family is able to consume?

Yugoslavia's current economic problems are largely caused by the country's huge Western debt and the measures taken to manage it, which continuously lowers the value of the dinar in free exchange and in return gets the inflation mill turning in Yugoslavia.

Unemployment is increased by the recession in the West, which is the reason why thousands of Yugoslav guest workers have had to leave their jobs in the West and return home.

But the most personal problems are experienced by the young themselves who, after studying for years for a career they wanted, find themselves in a situation with no hope of finding a job in their native country.

A Jobless Doctor

Slavica is a young doctor who is doing her internship in a Belgrade hospital after 5 years of study.

"I will not have a job in my own field for years," she says.

She spent last summer in England and is thinking of emigrating there after she finishes her internship. But in England you have to pay 175 pounds for a medical license and Slavica does not have this money.

"At the moment I am desperate," she says.

It is possible to set up a private enterprise in many fields, and Branko says that restaurateurs are among the wealthiest of Yugoslavs. But doctors are not permitted to open private practice.

Branko also says that his 12-year old son will hardly be able to find a job in the field he desires unless father can help in locating a job.

It seems that parents are the saviors of many a jobless youth. Parents also often help the young in the difficult search for housing and take care of them even after the young have married.

Ilic tells that the unemployed head of family may receive as much as 12,000 dinars per month as unemployment compensation. This in a country where the average monthly wage was 16,000 dinars last year.

But there are many limitations for obtaining financial assistance. For example, a young single person living with parents has no practical chances of obtaining any official assistance.

In addition to external factors, academic unemployment in particular is affected by previous poor planning of educational policy, Ilic claims.

"At the time we have 920,000 unemployed, we have a need for 300,000-400,000 workers, but they do not have appropriate training or education," he says.

According to him, there is a shortage of engineers and skilled workers, while large numbers of highly educated humanists and sociologists lack jobs.

And he adds that there are attempts to repair the situation with a totally new educational policy. Those departments at universities that produce unemployable graduates are being closed down and new ones are being opened to serve the fields with shortages in manpower.

Young Do Not Want Factory Jobs

The female journalist who writes about youth matters for POLITYKA sees still another angle in the problems.

"The young do not want to do heavy labor. A steel factory near Belgrade is constantly looking for workers but there are very few applicants," she says.

Ilic analyzes the current situation in Yugoslavia, which is characterized by serious economic problems and political expectations hiding just below the surface, by saying that "every moment has its own problems."

"After the war we had a strong period of reconstruction and the current younger generation is enjoying its fruits. But they again have their own problems, and we have to struggle every moment for the soul of every youth," he says.

He assures that the current situation does not result from socialism but from the recession in the West. He explains that the existing problems are but a natural stage in the development.

Ludmila, a young researcher, has her own, a little different, views on the causes for the current problems and on their solutions.

"Many young people feel that those who have brought on the problems are not able to solve them," she says referring to the Communists who have led Yugoslavia ever since World War II.

She says that there are many, both on the right and the left, who feel the entire problem is caused by too much democracy--a tighter grip would have kept matters under control.

"New Hitlers" Sign of the Times

"When there is a lot of dissatisfaction among the young, someone can always take political advantage of them," she says.

A young dissident warns about "new Hitlers" and says that the spread of extreme right ideas represents in a way a protest against the current system.

But Ludmila concurs with the idea that the 40 post-war years have given birth to a new Yugoslav generation in this ethnically diverse country.

"I am a Yugoslav," she says when I ask whether she is a Serb, a Croatian, or whether she belongs to some other ethnic group.

Big changes in the political system right now could mean the destruction of the new Yugoslav generation and Yugoslavia itself, is an often repeated warning here.

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END